

Fairfax Center Phase II Working Group

Meeting Minutes

April 5, 2016

Attendance

Working Group: Jackie Bradley, Vincent Picciano, Sherry Fisher, Jeff Parnes, Jeff Saxe, Robbie Stark, Chris Grisafe.

Staff: Kim Rybold (DPZ), Ken Sorenson (DPZ), Meghan Van Dam (DPZ), Rosemary Ryan (Supervisor Cook's office – Braddock District), Laura Floyd (Supervisor Smith's office – Sully District).

Introduction

Vince Picciano, Vice-Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The working group approved the March meeting minutes.

Presentation: Submission AW 9 (Development Elements) and Submission AW11 (Use-Specific Performance Criteria)

Kim Rybold presented information on the Development Elements. She said that in consultation with Zoning Evaluation Division (ZED) staff, the preferred approach would be to remove the development elements that are already required at the baseline level of development. Development Elements should better reflect the concept of the Fairfax Center Area. Staff noted that the scoring is cumbersome and should be updated. ZED explained to Planning Division (PD) staff that the Use Specific Performance criteria are helpful in evaluating applications in the Fairfax Center Area, but they should be updated and modified to meet current practices. Kim passed out a document that summarized the Development Elements and identified areas where other policies already cover some of the elements.

Discussion

Staff asked the group for feedback on what should be considered when updating the development elements. Jeff Saxe noted that a new element could be related to improvements that haven't occurred yet, such as planned interchanges. Jeff Parnes stated that large scale improvements, such as the Waples Mill/Route 50 interchange, should be given higher priority.

Vince Picciano asked what the effect of the recent proffer legislation would be on this area. Kim Rybold noted that the county has identified the Fairfax Center Area as one that would be exempt from the legislation.

Jeff Saxe stated that he thought most of the elements have served their purpose, and didn't know if they have resulted in a meaningful discussion. He stated that it would be radical to get rid of them and knows staff might not support that, but doesn't think it is necessary to call out the basic elements.

Chris Grisafe noted that items can be overlooked if they are not laid out explicitly. The development elements provide a measure of accountability. Jeff Saxe said that the elements should focus on the items that are special to the Fairfax Center Area, as opposed to other elements that are expected in other parts of the county as well. He stated that staff should draft a revised list of elements meeting this criteria, and then the group could provide additional feedback.

Staff asked if there were any additional thoughts on what to include when revising the development elements. Audience member Elizabeth Baker stated that in other parts of the plan, policies are not scored. The focus should be on design elements such as streetscape and architecture, and should be analyzed, not scored.

Jeff Saxe noted that the calculations used can seem arbitrary and some elements cost more to implement than others. However, all elements are weighted the same. In other parts of the county, elements like these would be achieved through negotiation. Staff should get rid of the quantitative scoring and have an objective discussion instead. Chris Grisafe agreed, stating that he didn't get the value of an arbitrary ratio. Staff should be able to weigh the individual needs of an area.

Rosemary Ryan asked if other suburban centers have a quantitative checklist. She noted that it is hard for infill development to meet the requirements, and wondered what a best practice would be for these instances.

Kim Rybold asked if there were any special elements the group would like staff to consider. Jeff Parnes said the group should look at what is different in the Fairfax Center Area than elsewhere. He noted that here developers have historically been responsible for their fair share of road improvements through the Road Fund. Elements that reflect individual sites being a part of a larger system should be retained.

Chris Grisafe noted that the impact of development and expected contributions should be related to the impact of the individual development.

Jeff Parnes asked if the group would be able to add to the list of intersections that need to be improved. For instance, the intersection of Route 50 and the Fairfax County Parkway should be a full interchange. Staff noted that the Road Fund is updated through a separate process, but recommendations that follow on to the results of this study could be evaluated later. Jeff Saxe affirmed that the Road Fund is a key component of the Plan for the area, and that it should be reflected within the Plan guidance.

Next Steps

Staff will present preliminary results of the impact analysis on the land use scenarios in May. In June staff will present a draft of the updated areawide guidance. The group's work should conclude in July, with a final draft document for the group to evaluate. Public hearings are expected in fall 2016.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.